

Public Reporting

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council



Public Comment Form

Amendment

Snapper Grouper Amendment 53

The Council is soliciting input on ways to reduce the number of fish that die after being caught and released in the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery.

Submit Date	Submitted By	Location	Affiliation	Comment
12/29/2022	First Name: RON Last Name: RINCONES Email: FISHRICO@AOL.COM	City: GRANT VALKARIA State: Florida	Private Recreational, For-Hire	THE MAJOR PROBLEM IN THE SN/GP FISHERY IS SANDBAR SHARKS. WHAT USE TO OCCUR RARELY NOT OCCURS SEVERAL TIMES ON EVERY TRIP. REGARDLESS OF THE DEPTH, SANDBAR & OCCASIONALLY BULL SHARKS TAKE OUR FISH. MOVE TO ANOTHER SPOT AND THE SAME THING OCCURS. I BOUGHT A SHARK DETERRENT DEVICE, AND MADE THE MISTAKE OF NOT USING WIRE OR CABLE AND SOMETHING TOOK IT!!! (CAPS USED FOR EASE OF READING)
1/8/2023	First Name: WELLS Last Name: BARKER Email: wbarker1@ec.rr.com	City: Beaufort State: North Carolina	Commercial, Wholesale/Dealer /Retail	<p>I have been a small scale commercial S/G fisherman and dealer operating out of Beaufort, N.C for the past 30+ years. I've been thru many amendments and never have I seen one with so many recreational data "contradictions". The gag sector allocations should not be changed, regardless of which set of landings data is correct because NOAA/S.A. Council have worked hard to create a very uneven com./rec. playing field by their actions. They have, over the years, steadily reduced the number of S/G fishermen thru their 2 for 1 permit regulation and this regulation, unbelievably, is still in effect today. During the same time period, the rec. sector has had no restrictions on their numbers.</p> <p>From the fisheries.noaa.gov website the computed average of rec. gag landings for the 5 years period (2015-2019) mentioned in the Amendment 35 Document (53 Doc) is 109K lbs.. From the SEDAR 72, the average for the same 5 years is computed to be 255K lbs.. From the 53 Doc the given average is 297K lbs.. All data was supposedly collected through "valid" methodology and even with some tweaking due to different collection methods, there should not be this much discrepancy.</p> <p>When looking at the 3 years (17-19) rec. gag landings data one can determine that NOAA reported landings averaged 112K lbs.. The SEDAR shows a 269K lbs, and the 53 Doc. shows a 364 K lbs. If the 53 Doc data is correct, then the rec. sector exceeded their sector allotted ACL in both 17 and 19 and did not encounter any accountability measures. On top of that, to propose increasing the rec. sector allocation based on landings that exceeded their ACL is borderline "criminal". I urge you to keep the sector allocations that are currently in effect (51% Comm./49% Rec.).</p> <p>To decrease the Comm. sector allocation on top of the proposed overall ACL reduction will have a greater economic effect on N.C. and S.C. Comm. S/G fishermen since this is the area where the gag landings are concentrated. At my age and with my small boat, I can't make the trip 35-40 miles offshore to get to other species in deeper water. In your 53 Doc. you quote a \$6+ price for gag per pound. F.Y.I., this past year it was \$8+ per pound.</p> <p>As to the assertion that gag grouper are over-fished and under-going over-fishing, I remind you that in 2014 SEDAR, NOAA declared gags as not being over-fished nor was over-fishing occurring. Since that assessment, the total gag ACL that you put in place has not been exceeded and yet somehow, here we are "over-fished/fishing". I urge you to leave the sector allocations as they are and please let this rebuilding process be as painless as possible for all involved (fishermen, dealers, and the public that has a great demand for local, fresh caught seafood). Thank you for your time.</p>
1/9/2023	First Name: WELLS Last Name: BARKER Email: wjb6973@gmail.com	City: Beaufort State: North Carolina	Commercial, Wholesale/Dealer /Retail	<p>I have been a small scale commercial S/G fisherman and dealer operating out of Beaufort, N.C for 30+ years. I've been through many amendments and never have I seen one with so many recreational data "contradictions". The gag sector allocations should not be changed regardless of which set of landings data is correct because NOAA / S. A. Council have worked hard to create an uneven com./rec. playing field by their actions. They have, over the years, steadily reduced the number of com. S/G fishermen with the 2 for 1 permit regulation and, unbelievably, it is still in effect today. During the same time period, the rec. sector has had no restrictions on their numbers. From the fisheries.noaa.gov website the computed rec. gag average for the 5 years (15-19) mentioned in the Amendment 53 Document (53 Doc.) is 109 K lbs. From the SEDAR 72 assessment the average for the same 5 years is 255 K lbs.. From the 53 Doc., the average is given as 297 K lbs.. All data were collected thru "valid" methodology and even with some tweaking of the data due to different collection methods, there should not be this much discrepancy. When looking at the 3 years (17,18,19) rec. gag averages we find that the NOAA website data gives 112 K lbs. average. The SEDAR gives a 269 K lbs. average. The 53 Doc. gives a 364 K lbs. average. If the 53 Doc. landings data are correct, then the rec. sector exceeded their allotted ACL in both 17 and 19 and did not encounter any accountability measures. On top of that, to use data that exceeded the rec. ACL to reward the sector by giving them an increase in their ACL allotment is borderline criminal. I urge you to leave the allocations that are currently in effect (com.51%/rec. 49%) in place. Doing so would have no effect on the rebuilding process. To decrease the com. sector allocation in addition to a decrease in the total allocation will have a greater effect on N.C. and S.C. com. S/G fishermen since this is the primary area where gags are landed. Many small scale businesses like mine will be adversely affected economically. At my age, with my "small" boat, I can't make the 35-40+ miles offshore to target other fish species that are found abundantly in deeper water. In your 53 Doc., the price the fisherman gets paid for gag is just over \$6. F.Y.I., this past year, it was \$8+. As to the assertion that gag are both over-fished and under-going over-fishing, just consider this: As a result of the 2014 SEDAR assessment, NOAA declared gag to be not over-fished or under-going over-fishing. Since that time, the total gag landings each year fell below the ACL that you, the Council, determined to be acceptable. Now, you say that gag are being both over-fished and over-fishing is occurring and we, the fishermen, are to pay the price. I urge you to leave the sector allocations as they are and to make the rebuilding process as painless as possible to all (fishermen, dealers, and the public that desires to have access to fresh, locally caught seafood). Thank you for your time.</p>